

Assessing & Addressing Systemic Unfairness

Proventive Solutions 

Fairness

- Fairness is treating employees on a “level playing field”. To be fair can involve the application of:
 - Equality : The equal treatment of equals (i.e. treating employees in similar circumstances in the same way)
 - Equity: The unequal treatment of unequals (i.e. treating employees differently to address differences in circumstances).

Unfairness Perspectives:

1. Legislative and Entitlement “Rights” Perspective

- Organisations' usually view Fair Treatment of employees from a legal “rights” and employee entitlement perspective.

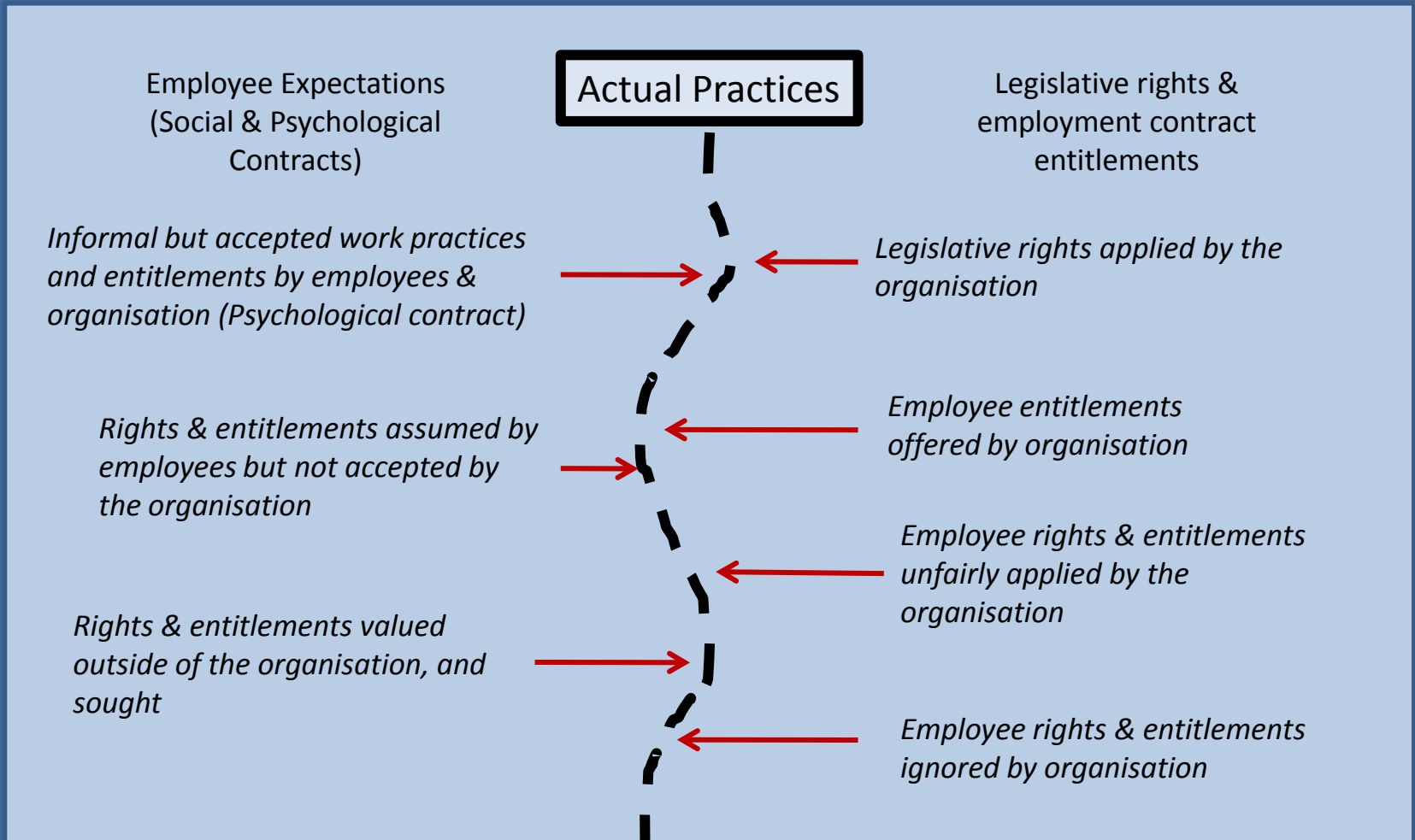
Unfairness Perspectives:

2. Employees also view fairness from a Social “Rights” Perspective

Organisational Fairness is also about employees perception of fairness.

- A decision can be “technically” correct but if the perception of fair treatment is not also addressed, employees can feel aggrieved (i.e. “justice has not only to be done, but be seen to be done”) in terms of:
 - Was a decision fair one (taking all things into account)?
 - Did the process allow employees to be treated fairly?
 - Were interactions fair? (e.g. were employee’s issues really listened to and respected?)
- A decision can be “technically” correct but not address the underlying issues that perpetuate perceptions of unfair treatment (e.g. these may include historical and deeply ingrained grievances)

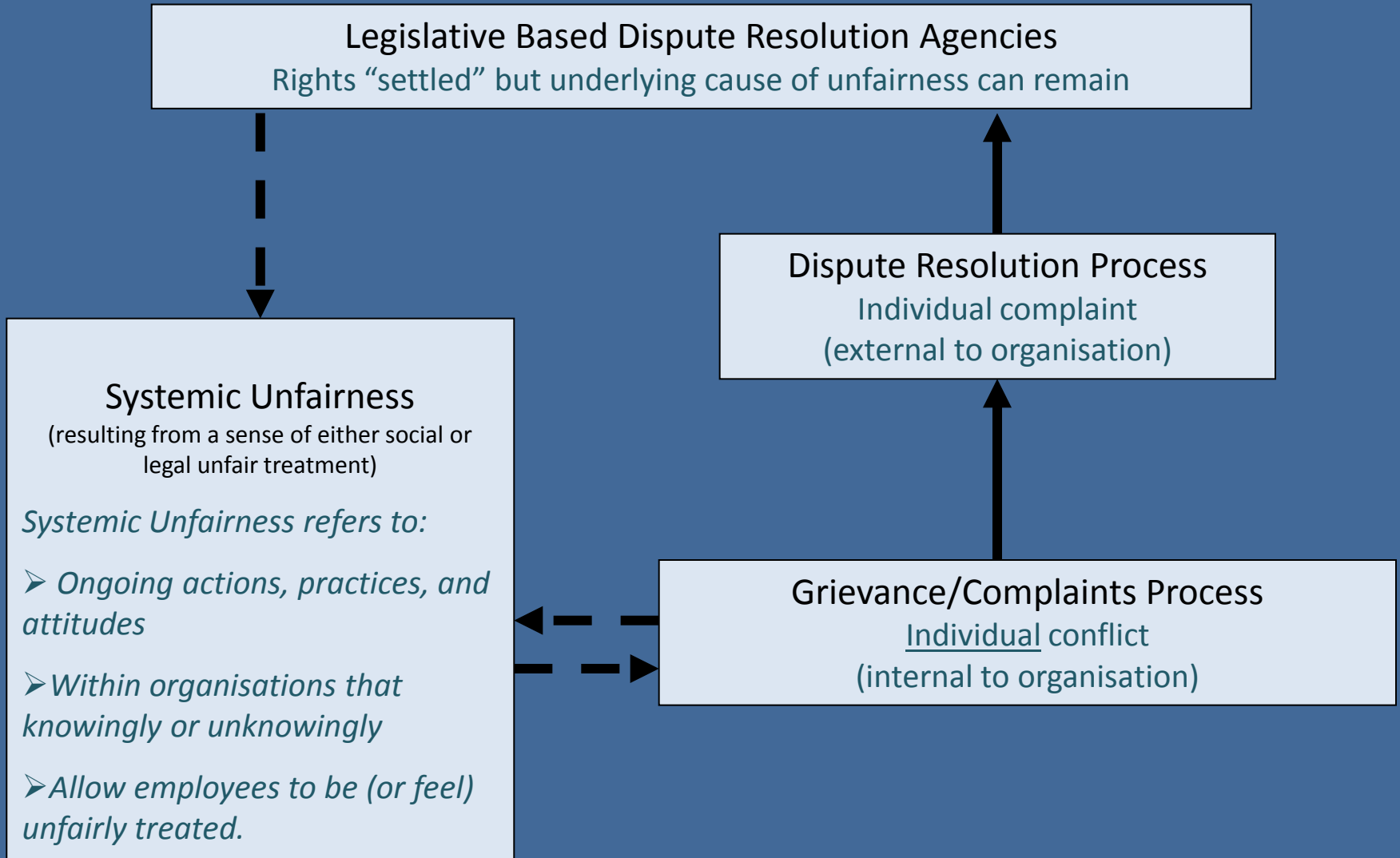
Unfairness as breaches of two forms of “contract rights”



Both Social and Legal 'Rights' result in complaints

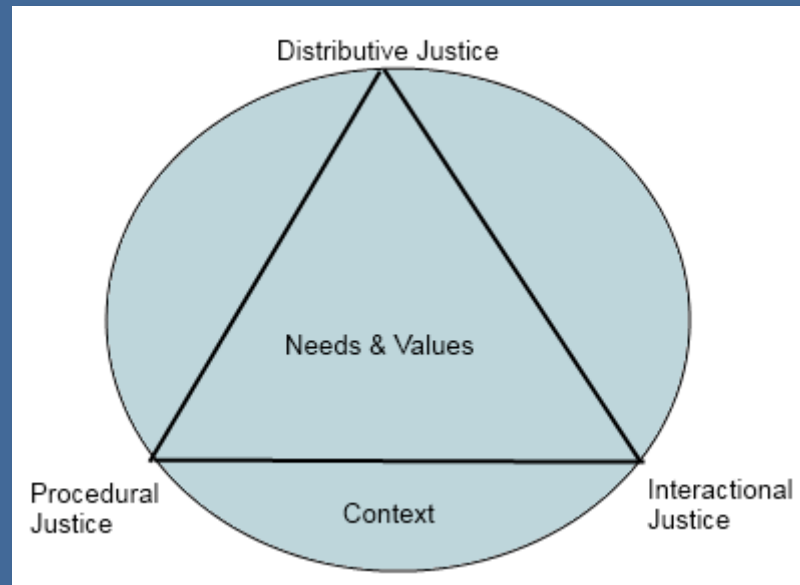


Systemic Unfairness & the Legal Framework



A Conflict Analysis Model using Organisational Justice Principles

(Can be used to identify both social and legal based complaints – therefore addresses Systemic Unfairness)



Translating the Conflict Analysis Model - Example

The Conflict Analysis Chart		(Iterative and evolving record) 1 of 1	
Parties	Conflict Issues (e.g. Context and underlying values and needs)	Legislation, Policy, and Organizational Justice Principles	Observations, goals, & options
Management	<i>Transfer of role into new organizational structure. Management unwilling to change decision to transfer role</i>	<i>Authorised Organizational restructure initiative</i>	<i>Role is to be transferred to a new unit in the new organisation structure, and its focus changed to support new direction.</i>
Ms B. Brave	<i>Increased workplace stress and interpersonal conflicts from changes such as lack of support; change management leading to anxiety & uncertainty, historical interpersonal conflicts recurring as a result of placement in new location.</i>	<i>WH&S Act Stress Risk Factors -Interactional issues.</i>	<i>Stress Risk Management Audit required? Conflict coaching linked to Facilitated Decision Making? Role and person may be split?</i>
	<i>Ability to develop career in preferred profession undermined by changes. Feelings of lack of control (see workplace stressors). No training and development offered (breach of EEO & Fair Treatment policies) causing disadvantage in promotion and development roles.</i>	<i>Legislative & Policy issues. Procedural issues</i>	<i>Assurance sought to maintain preferred career path if role and person are split. Security of employee a concern if separated from role. Fair treatment & EEO Policies a basis for unfair treatment grievance.</i>

Costs of Systemic Unfairness

- ❑ Potential for ongoing complaints, or disputes and compensation claims
- ❑ Adverse public and community relations
- ❑ Costs of poorer organisation, group, and employee performance
- ❑ Higher absenteeism costs
- ❑ Negative work attitudes
- ❑ Loss of productivity through disengaged employees
- ❑ Greater difficulty attracting and retaining employees
- ❑ Potential for higher employee turnover rates and costs
- ❑ More resistance to change

For further advice please contact David Alman

Contact details can be found on
proventivesolutions.com.au